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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TASHKENT 000136

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FROM AMBASSADOR NORLAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019-02-03
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: RFG: Uzbekistan Transit Next Steps

REF: a) UZBEK MFA DIP NOTE 05/2636 OF 1/28/09
b) US-UZ DRAFT AGREEMENT DIP NOTE OF 1/12/09, c) TASHKENT 128
d) UZBEK MFA DIP NOTE 05/69 OF 1/4/09
e) UZBEK MFA DIP NOTE 20/1306 OF 1/16/09

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CLASSIFIED BY: Nicholas Berliner, Pol-Econ Chief; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

[1](#)1. (U) This message contains a request for guidance at para 4.

[1](#)2. (C) The diplomatic note containing the GOU's latest proposed agreement on transit (ref a) that was given to us on January 29 by Uzbek Foreign Minister Norov was confirmation that the GOU wants an agreement above and beyond a simple exchange of notes (ref b). Norov himself confirmed this, saying that it was important for the Uzbek bureaucracy to have a legal framework to ensure that things will go smoothly (ref c). At the same time, however, he indicated that there was a degree of flexibility on the Uzbek side as to the modalities contained in the agreement, particularly regarding the question of notification. He made clear that the Uzbeks want to facilitate transit.

[1](#)3. (C) It is now incumbent upon on us to respond to the latest Uzbek counterproposal. The upcoming February 17 visit of CENTCOM Commander General Petraeus gives us both momentum and the important leverage of a forcing event, as Norov indicated to us that the GOU would like to see this issue resolved by the time of the visit and even suggested that a team come to Tashkent for that purpose. Although we do not discount the possibility, we do not believe that face-to-face talks are essential at this time. What is essential is that we have an understanding on the U.S. side as to the form of the agreement and the conditions that can satisfy the Uzbek demand for visibility into our supply pipeline without compromising its operational efficiency. The demand for visibility and compliance with Uzbek law is at the heart of the GOU insistence on an agreement with this level of detail.

[1](#)4. (C) Request for Guidance: The current Uzbek draft calls for a minimum of 30 days advance notification of inbound shipments and details regarding the nature, origin and dimensions of their contents. We need to aim for a process that is as streamlined as

possible, being cognizant of the fact some accommodation with the demands of the GOU bureaucracy is inevitable. Embassy Tashkent requests Washington guidance to respond to the latest Uzbek proposal. Key issues that we believe need clarification are:

- a) Preferred format for an agreement, i.e. agreed text, exchange of letters, diplomatic notes. We expect that content is more important to the GOU than form.
- b) What is an acceptable notification period for inbound shipments (current GOU draft 30 days)?
- c) Feasibility of pre-notification on individual containers and their contents, including country of origin of goods therein.
- d) Expected volumes of cargo that would transit Uzbekistan by various modes of transport.
- e) Contingency language that leaves open future possibility of flights from Navoi to Afghanistan.
- f) Contingency language that leaves open the possibility of moving backed-up traffic waiting to enter Hairaton, Afghanistan to Tajikistan for onward transit.

15. (C) We believe that the GOU is eager to move forward on transit and we should leverage General Petraeus' visit to move this issue

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to conclusion. Please advise.
NORLAND

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